



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Oct. 10, 2012

For More Information, Contact:

Molly Howell or

Lindsey VanderBusch

North Dakota Department of Health

Phone: 701.328.2378

E-mail: [mahowell@nd.gov](mailto:mahowell@nd.gov)

[lvanderbusch@nd.gov](mailto:lvanderbusch@nd.gov)

### **North Dakota Department of Health Urges Everyone To Get Vaccinated This Flu Season**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is reminding all North Dakotans of the importance of getting vaccinated against the flu, according to Molly Howell, Immunization Program manager for the Department of Health.

“There is plenty of flu vaccine this year, so we are urging everyone to get vaccinated to avoid influenza, regardless of age or health status,” Howell said. “Getting vaccinated is the easiest and most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu. Even if you don’t feel the need to be vaccinated to protect yourself, everyone is close to someone who is at high risk for complications due to influenza, so you still should be vaccinated.”

In North Dakota, influenza activity begins in the fall and typically peaks in March or April. Health officials say that people can get vaccinated anytime during the influenza season, but the best time to get vaccinated is now, when flu activity is low.

During a news conference held today at the Golden Ages Senior Center in Mandan, Pat and Arvin Swanson of Minot talked about the importance of getting vaccinated and received their flu shots. Pat and Arvin are great-grandparents and talked about the importance of protecting both themselves, and their family.

“Being healthy is important to us because we spend a lot of time with our grandchildren and great-grandchildren,” said Pat Swanson of Minot. “It’s also important for people my age to get vaccinated, because we all are at risk of getting severely ill if we would catch the flu.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone age 6 months and older be vaccinated against the flu, especially the following people at high risk for complications:

- All children ages 6 months through 4 years
- All adults 50 and older

– more –

- Residents of long-term care facilities
- People of any age who have long-term health problems, such as:
  - Heart disease.
  - Lung disease.
  - Kidney disease.
  - Diabetes.
  - Asthma.
  - Anemia.
  - Weakened immune systems due to HIV/AIDS and cancer treatments.
  - Breathing problems due to neuromuscular disorders.
- Pregnant women
- American Indians/Alaska Natives
- People who are morbidly obese

The flu shot is available to all people age 6 months and older. The nasal flu vaccine is approved for healthy people ages 2 to 49 that are not pregnant. The intradermal flu vaccine is approved for people ages 19 to 64.

People who could spread the disease to those at high risk – such as health-care workers, out-of-home caregivers, parents and caregivers of infants younger than 6 months and household contacts – also should be vaccinated.

“Custer Health in Mandan is prepared to kick-off prevention efforts to control the influenza virus,” said Heather Weaver with Custer Health. “We have several walk-in flu vaccine clinics planned throughout October and two days available by appointment. Get vaccinated now so that you will be protected when flu season begins.”

Clinics are being planned by local public health units across the state and are available from many doctors and pharmacists. Residents are encouraged to contact their local public health unit, doctor or pharmacist for information about vaccine availability in their area.

For more information, contact Molly Howell or Lindsey VanderBusch, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378. Information about influenza can be found at [www.ndflu.com](http://www.ndflu.com).

**REMEMBER: A flu vaccine can protect not only you, but everyone around you.**

– 30 –

*Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at [www.nddohpressroom.gov](http://www.nddohpressroom.gov).*